



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS**

# SUCCESS STORY

## Communities Plan for Joint Prosperity

**Councils help villages resolve issues hindering economic development.**



Farmer Japar Kaliev represents his village's concerns to the local economic development council, which works collaboratively to resolve them.

***“Even during the Soviet times, we were separate farms, working and living separately. But in these seven villages we have common problems and common interests, like agriculture and land. If we all work together, we can solve our common problems,” said Japar Kaliev, a Kyzyl-Jyldyz village representative on the local economic development council.***

Telling Our Story  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC 20523-1000  
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

Kyzyl-Jyldyz, a small farming village in southwestern Kyrgyzstan's Ferghana Valley, has long depended on cotton harvests. However, thieves swiped the electrical transformer that powers the deep-water well dug to irrigate the village's 40-hectare (98-acre) field, placing the livelihoods of 35 families in jeopardy.

Unable to replace the transformer, villagers tried to secure water from a municipal system 14 kilometers (8 miles) away, but local authorities dismissed that plan as unfeasible. Farmers who could afford to do so purchased water from private well owners, while others resorted to siphoning the flow from pipes meant to irrigate another village, causing tussles with their neighbors.

USAID organized seven local economic development councils in Kyrgyzstan's share of the densely populated Ferghana Valley. Each council, made up of elected representatives from six or seven neighboring villages, is charged with identifying and implementing projects that raise household income across the entire geographical area.

Replacing Kyzyl-Jyldyz's deep-well transformer was one of the items the council placed on the list. “When we explained the importance of this project to the [economic development council] members, they let us launch this project first because they understand other villages will benefit, too,” said Japar Kaliev, one of Kyzyl-Jyldyz's representatives at the council. USAID's project implementing partner helps flesh out the priority initiatives and, if they seem feasible, agrees to shoulder a portion of the cost. In this case, the partner will co-fund purchasing, repairing, and installing a used transformer.

With the well restored, the village is now planning to shift away from growing cotton — which strips nutrients from the soil and now trades at a lower price — to more profitable crops such as tomatoes and onions, which require more water. Japar said, “Increases in household income can help families afford better houses and hot water, and bring telecommunications infrastructure and perhaps a kindergarten to the area.”